

REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Final Office Action mailed from the Patent and Trademark Office on January 25, 2006, which has a shortened statutory period set to expire April 25, 2006. In view of the amendments above and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all pending rejections.

Drawings

A revised Fig. 1a is submitted in the Submission of Proposed Drawing Amendment filed herewith. Revised Fig. 1a includes newly entered reference numbers that identify features shown in Fig. 1a (as filed). No new matter is entered.

Specification

The specification is amended to describe the additional reference numbers entered in Fig. 1a, thereby better describing that which Applicants believe is their invention. No new matter is entered.

Claims

Claims 1, 2, 5-13 and 29 are pending in the above-identified application, and stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,324,312 (Liang).

In the current paper, Claim 1 is amended to recite (in pertinent part):

...the second end of the second branch abutting the first side edge of the first branch to form an interface, wherein the second side edge of the second branch forms an angle (θ_2) with the first side edge of the first branch, and

wherein the interface is aligned parallel to the first direction and forms an incident angle (θ_1) with the first side edge of the first branch;
wherein $n_2 < n_1$ and $\theta_1 \geq \sin^{-1} (n_2 / n_1)$, whereby light passing through the first branch in the reverse direction is prevented from passing into the second branch through the interface.

Support for the amendment to Claim 1 is provided in Fig. 1a (as amended herein) and in the specification on page 7 (as amended herein). No new matter is entered.

As amended, Claim 1 is distinguished over Liang because Liang fails to teach or suggest "interface is aligned parallel to the first direction and forms an incident angle (θ_1) with the first side edge of the first branch; wherein $n_2 < n_1$ and $\theta_1 \geq \sin^{-1} (n_2 / n_1)$, whereby light passing through the first branch in the reverse direction is prevented from passing into the second branch through the interface", as recited in Claim 1.

Claims 2 and 5-8 and 10-13 are dependent from Claim 1, and are therefore distinguished over Liang for at least the reasons provided above with reference to Claim 1.

Claim 9 is canceled, thereby obviating the objection directed to this claim.

Claim 29 is amended to recite limitations similar to those recited in amended Claim 1, and as such Claim 29 is believed to be distinguished over Liang for at least the reasons provided above with reference to Claim 1.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 USC 102.

Claims Subjected to Election/Restriction Requirement

Claims 3, 4, 14-28 and 30 are subjected to election and/or restriction requirement.

Claims 27, 28 and 30 are canceled here, thereby obviating the requirements directed to these claims.

Claims 3, 4, and 14-26 are dependent from Claim 1, and Applicants believe Claim 1 (as amended herein) remains generic with respect to the various disclosed species embodied in these claims. As such, Applicants respectfully requests re-entry of these claims should Claim 1 be allowed in response to this paper.

CONCLUSION

For the above reasons, Applicants believe Claims 1-26 and 29 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present paper, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as FIRST CLASS MAIL in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on April 4, 2006.

Date: 4/4/2006 Signature: Rebecca A. Baumann
Rebecca A. Baumann

IN THE DRAWINGS

A revised Fig. 1a is submitted in the Submission of Proposed Drawing Amendment filed herewith. Revised Fig. 1a includes newly entered reference numbers that identify features shown in Fig. 1a (as filed). No new matter is entered.

MARKED-UP COPY OF AS-FILED FIGURE

